
Regional Council Activity Report

January 28, 2004



Executive Director's Report

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

As I was preparing for Governor Janet Napolitano's visit to MAG for a ceremonial signing, this quote seemed to summarize everything happening at MAG with the Regional Transportation Plan.

It was a group of accomplisners, dreamers and believers who stood behind Governor Napolitano on Monday. The Governor visited MAG on February 9th for a ceremonial signing of House Bill 2456, which authorizes a public vote on the continuation of the half-cent sales tax for transportation.

It was a rewarding moment for me, and I'm sure the elected officials, to see the Governor recognize the many individuals who worked to develop the Regional Transportation Plan and who helped move it through the legislative process.

The signing of House Bill 2456 was a watershed event in the history of MAG. Not only has it been two decades since the last 20-year plan was brought before voters – but this process has been one of monumental collaboration unlike any seen before. In 1985, the plan was developed by a relative few. The Regional Transportation Plan before us today had hundreds of authors, including Valley citizens who shared their visions for the future. It was the "big tent," where everyone came together in a unified purpose.

Although the Transportation Policy Committee was born out of a review of our governance process, I'm not sure anyone realized just how successful the public/private model would be in developing a transportation plan. The living document that was created will serve us well for generations to come.

It is a great day for MAG. I am looking forward to another great day – November 2, 2004, when I expect we will have even greater cause for celebration.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, (602) 254-6300.



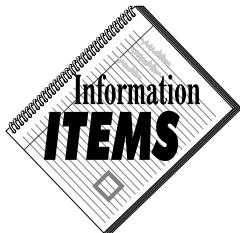
Regional Council Meeting Report for January 28, 2004

Action Items

MAG Transportation Safety Committee Established

In recognition of the importance of safety planning and in accord with the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, titled "SAFETEA," the MAG Regional Council approved creation of a Transportation Safety Committee. This committee will create more opportunities for regional collaboration to improve road safety through better planning. ISTEA initially introduced the need for safety management at state and metropolitan levels. The Transportation Safety Committee will further MAG's proactive track record in the safety arena, which has included funding of median cable barriers and launching the Freeway Service Patrol.

For more information, contact Sarath Joshua, MAG ITS Manager, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Regional Council Receives Legislative Update

The Regional Council was given an update on two legislative bills seeking to extend the half-cent sales tax for transportation, House Bill 2456 and Senate Bill 1074. At the time of the Regional Council meeting, HB 2456 had been passed by the House Transportation Committee and was awaiting assignment, while SB 1074 was awaiting action by the Senate Finance Committee. In the meantime, the Senate Finance Committee passed SB 1082, which called for a "bifurcated" ballot to include a separate question on light rail. Since the Regional Council meeting, both the full Senate and House rejected the bifurcation bill and approved HB 2456 with an amendment that authorizes an election in November 2004. The bill passed with a 50-8 vote in the House and a 25-3 vote in the Senate. It was signed by the Governor on February 5, 2004.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Discussion Centers on New Work Program

Each year, the MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget is developed with member agency and public input. To provide an early start in developing the FY 2005 Work Program and Budget, a presentation was made

to Regional Council members to provide an overview of MAG's proposed new projects and draft Dues and Assessments. A summary budget document, "MAG Programs in Brief," was also provided to give Regional Council members a more user-friendly document to help outline the financial implications of MAG's budget. MAG staff is hosting a budget workshop at the MAG offices on February 13, 2004 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The workshop can also be attended via videoconference.

To provide additional comments and input, or for more information about the budget and/or the budget workshop, contact Becky Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

EPA Modifies Eight-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area Boundary

On December 3, 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated its intent to modify the Governor's recommendation for the eight-hour ozone nonattainment area boundary to include parts of Pinal County. The EPA added that the proposed modification encompasses an area that is contiguous with the Phoenix metropolitan area and includes Apache Junction, Pinal County's largest city. The ozone boundary would also include the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. MAG environmental staff is working with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to submit additional information supporting the Governor's recommendation.

For more information, contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.



Upcoming Events

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be held Wednesday, February 25, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include proposed acceptance of the Social Services Block Grant funding recommendations for FY 04-05, an update on preparations for conducting the 2005 Census, and a discussion of the MAG Work Program and Annual Budget. Additional agenda items are pending.

For more information, contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.